

**CRICETODON MINUS LARTET, 1851 (MAMMALIA, RODENTIA):
REQUEST FOR A DECISION ON INTERPRETATION. Z.N.(S.) 1854**

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The genus *Cricetodon* was erected by Lartet, 1851, to designate hamster-like rodents from the Miocene locality Sansan (Gers), France. Lartet distinguished three species with the following diagnoses:

C. sansaniense: Un peu plus grand que le Hamster;

C. medium: D'un tiers moindre que le *Cricetodon sansaniense* et plus petit que notre rat noir;

C. minus: Plus petit que notre souris domestique.

Schaub, 1925, in his revision of the genus, chose *C. sansaniense* as the type-species. Fahlbusch, 1964 chose a lectotype for *C. sansaniense* from a small Sansan collection kept in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris; this collection may have been collected by Lartet himself.

2. Apart from *C. sansaniense* the Sansan fauna contains at least five species of Cricetodontinae and it is not obvious to which of these species the names *medium* and *minus* should be applied. Schaub distinguished the following species: *C. sansaniense* Lartet 1851; *C. helveticum* Schaub, 1925; *C. gailliardi* Schaub, 1925; *C. affine* Schaub, 1925; *C. breve* Schaub, 1925; *C. minus* Lartet, 1851. Thus Schaub left out the name *medium* as he could not decide to which species of medium size this name should be applied. Fahlbusch, 1964 described a fragmentary maxilla from the above mentioned Sansan collection of the Paris Museum which bears the designation *Cricetodon medium*; this specimen belongs to the species that Schaub described as *C. helveticum* from Sansan. Fahlbusch chose it as the lectotype of *C. medium* thus making the name *C. helveticus* disappear from the faunal list of Sansan. However, this does not mean that *C. medium* and *C. helveticus* are synonyms. The type-locality of *C. helveticus* is Rümikon in Switzerland, and there is good reason to believe that the populations from Sansan and Rümikon are sufficiently different to consider them as separate (sub)species.

3. Schaub did give a clear interpretation of the name *C. minus*; it should be the smallest species of *Cricetodon* from Sansan, the next-larger species was called by Schaub *C. breve*. Most subsequent authors followed this interpretation (cf. Mein, 1958; Freudenthal, 1963; Baudelot, 1964). The type locality of *C. breve* is the Miocene locality La Grive, St. Alban (Isère) France. Freudenthal, 1963 supposed that *C. breve* from Sansan is not identical with *C. breve* from La Grive. Fahlbusch, 1964 distinguished these two populations as different subspecies.

4. In 1951 Stehlin and Schaub recognized that the name *Cricetodon* is masculine instead of neuter; thus the endings of the species names must be changed to the masculine form.

5. Fahlbusch, 1964 split up the genus *Cricetodon* into three genera: *Cricetodon* Lartet, 1851; Genotype *C. sansaniensis* Lartet, 1851.

Cotimus Black, 1961; Genotype *C. alicae* Black, 1961 from the Miocene of Montana, U.S.A. To this genus belong *C. medius*, *C. helveticus*, etc.

Democricetodon Fahlbusch, 1964, with the subgenera *Democricetodon* and *Megacricetodon* Fahlbusch, 1964. Freudenthal, 1965 considered these subgenera as separate genera; Fahlbusch, 1966 agreed with this conception.

Fahlbusch, 1964 rejected Schaub's interpretation of the name *C. minus* and gave a new one; this interpretation is based on the small Sansan collection in the Paris Museum of Natural History, which was presumably collected by Lartet, and which also contains his lectotypes of *C. sansaniensis* and *C. medius*. A fragment of a maxilla and a fragment of a mandible from this collection evidently belong to the species which Schaub, 1925 identified as *C. breve*. Fahlbusch chose these two specimens as the lectotype and paralectotype respectively, of *Democricetodon* (*Democricetodon*) *minor* (Lartet, 1851). The species which Schaub, 1925 considered as *C. minus* Lartet, 1851 was consequently given a new name; *Democricetodon* (*Megacricetodon*) *schaubi* Fahlbusch, 1964. Freudenthal, 1965 did not agree with this interpretation and proposed maintaining the original interpretation by Schaub.

6. In the following account Fahlbusch and Freudenthal each give their view concerning this problem. We request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, to decide what should be regarded as *Cricetodon minus* Lartet, 1851.

PROPOSAL OFFICIALLY TO RECOGNIZE SCHAUB'S
INTERPRETATION OF THE NAME *CRICETODON MINUS* LARTET,
1851

By M. Freudenthal

Arguments:

- (a) Lartet described *C. minus* as "plus petit que notre souris domestique". Apparently this designation was based on the lengths of either isolated molars or of the tooth rows in complete jaws. In both cases Schaub's interpretation fits better than Fahlbusch's interpretation: *C. minor* sensu Schaub is definitely smaller than *C. minor* sensu Fahlbusch. The field of variation of the lengths of the tooth rows in *Mus musculus* L. (most probably the "souris domestique" mentioned by Lartet) partly overlaps the field of variation in *C. minor* sensu Schaub; the average for *Mus musculus* is smaller, but at least the diagnosis of Lartet is valid for a number of specimens of *C. minor* sensu Schaub. However, all specimens of *C. minor* sensu Fahlbusch are larger than *M. musculus*; thus, Fahlbusch's interpretation is not consistent with the original diagnosis.
- (b) The original material of Lartet, used by Fahlbusch, is of doubtful value. Even if it was actually collected by Lartet, there is no certainty at all that it constitutes the type collection on which the original diagnoses were based; for this reason one may choose neotypes from it, but no lectotypes. Further-